

S. ADVANCE TASER M26/X26

1. PURPOSE

This procedure sets forth the Gwinnett County Sheriff's Department policy regarding deployment of the TASER International ADVANCED TASER M26/X26 (hereafter referred to as TASER).

2. DEFINITION

The TASER is a less-lethal Conducted Energy Weapon that uses propelled wires to conduct energy to a remote target, thereby controlling and overriding the body's central nervous system. It uses an electromuscular disruption system with a 26-watt electrical signal to temporarily override the central nervous system and directly control the skeletal muscles. This causes an uncontrollable contraction of the muscle tissue, allowing the TASER to physically debilitate a target regardless of pain tolerance or mental focus. The TASER affects the sensory and motor nervous systems, both stunning and physically incapacitating the target. It has no long-term effects.

The TASER fires two probes up to a distance of twenty one (21) feet from a replaceable cartridge. These probes are connected to the weapon by high-voltage insulated wire. When the probes make contact with the target, the TASER transmits electrical pulses along the wires into the body of the target, through up to two inches of clothing.

The TASER also has contact probes at the front of the unit that allows a back-up touch stun. The TASER has a data port; it stores the time and date when it was fired. This data protects the officers from claims of excessive use of force by providing complete and accurate documentation of each firing.

The TASER is an alternative less lethal force option. It may be used to control a non-compliant subject. It is deployed as an additional law enforcement tool, and is not intended to replace firearms or self-defense techniques. The TASER **is not a substitute** for deadly force. It should not be used in a deadly force situation without proper attention to officer safety and deadly force backup.

3. PROCEDURES

- a. The TASER shall be issued to and used only by Deputies who have completed the Gwinnett County Sheriff's Department TASER Training Program.
- b. Only properly functioning and charged TASERS shall be carried in the field.
- c. Each discharge, including accidental discharge, of a TASER shall be investigated and documented utilizing the Department Use of Force Report.
- d. There are two methods of deployment of the TASER.

DART DEPLOYMENT: Two darts are fired from the TASER from a distance of 3 to 21 feet away. This method disrupts the central nervous system, the sensory nervous system, and the motor nervous system resulting in an almost complete and immediate incapacitation of the subject.

DRIVE STUN MODE: This is a press contact of the two front probes of the weapon directly onto a subject's body. Due to the limited probe spread (2 inches), this severely limits the effect of the weapon. The weapon now only affects the central nervous

system (command center of the brain responsible for decision making) which limits the effect to pain compliance only.

Note: The Drive Stun Method is prohibited when sufficient staff is on scene and the subject's movements have been controlled or restricted. Examples would include, but is not limited to, the following:

1. When a subject has been partially controlled in the restraint chair or otherwise immobilized.
 2. When a subject has been controlled by swarm techniques.
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- e. Keep hands away from the front of the unit at all times unless the safety slide is forward and the TASER is deactivated.
 - f. Aim at the upper torso. Never aim the TASER at the eyes or face. It is laser-sighted. The top probe will follow the front and rear sights and the laser sight; the bottom probe will travel at an eight (8) degree downward angle below the aim point/laser-sighted area. The bottom probe drops one foot every seven feet that it travels.
 - g. The TASER is programmed to give a five second "electrical current." The operator can shorten or extend this time. During this time, do not touch the probes, within two inches of the probes, or between the probes in order to avoid receiving the same "electrical current" as the target. Avoid stepping on or tripping over the wires.
 - h. Probes, which have penetrated the body, should be treated as contaminated needles.
 - i. Do not fire the TASER near flammable liquids or fumes. The TASER can ignite gasoline or other flammables. Some self-defense sprays are flammable and would be extremely dangerous to use in conjunction with the TASER. Do not deploy the TASER in highly flammable drug labs. Avoid use on known pregnant females.
 - j. Always replace air cartridges by their expiration date and use expired cartridges for training only.
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4. IMMEDIATE SUPERVISORS' RESPONSIBILITIES
- a. Ensure the batteries of the TASER are properly charged. (Duracell Ultra alkaline batteries or Energizer NiMH rechargeable are the only recommended batteries). When checking the batteries, the cartridge must be removed. A blinking LED light indicates the batteries are good; otherwise replace them. Duracell Ultra batteries need to be above freezing if they are to be used. If rechargeable Energizers are used, the batteries must be recharged properly. The battery indicator will not properly work with rechargeable batteries. To test rechargeable batteries, remove the cartridge and check for a rapid pulse rate of 12-15 pulses per second.
 - b. Ensure that Deputies who use the TASER complete a Use of Force Report. Use includes presentation, "stun" or discharge.
 - c. Investigate each incident in which a TASER is fired or used as a "stun gun", and review the Use of Force Report.

- d. Ensure that photographs are taken of the probe penetration sites and any secondary injuries.

5. FIELD OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. Upon encountering a situation that may require the use of a TASER, request a TASER equipped officer, if available.
- b. When practical, do not escalate the situation prior to the arrival of an equipped backup and a supervisor.

6. DISCHARGING OFFICERS RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. Prior to the use of the TASER, if practical, notify other officers on the scene of the imminent deployment of the TASER to prevent officer surprise and sympathetic shootings. Recommended notification is "TASER".
- b. Tactical Deployment.
 - 1. Use common sense.
 - 2. Use verbal commands and point laser sight at subject prior to firing.
 - 3. Use to prevent violent confrontation.
 - 4. Have a second air cartridge present or a second TASER ready to fire in case of a miss or malfunction.
 - 5. When possible, have a backup officer (depending on the situation, possibly with deadly force option).
 - 6. Use cover and distance to ensure officer safety.
 - 7. Optimum range is twelve to eighteen feet. Minimum range is three feet. Maximum range is twenty-one feet. If target runs, officer must run also to prevent wire breakage.
 - 8. Aim at center of mass and from rear if possible. Watch for thick and/or loose clothing. If probes hit clothing, the electrical current can only penetrate from the maximum of two inches away.
 - 9. Avoid use on slanted rooftops or on the edge of tall buildings.
- c. Notify immediate supervisor following use of the TASER.
- d. Medical staff shall check each subject who has been exposed to the probes of the TASER.
- e. Complete a Use of Force Report.

- f. The TASER cartridge and probes used shall be maintained as evidence. Since the probes will probably have blood on them (biohazard), the officers should wear protective latex gloves when handling. If feasible, the probes should be removed by trained medical staff or Emergency Medical Personnel. The probes should be inserted (sharp end first) into the portals they originally were deployed from (to prevent further danger from the sharp ends) and tape placed over the portals to secure the probes in the cartridge. The wires should be wound around the cartridge. Place the entire cartridge into an evidence envelope and submit with incident report.

7. CARE OF THE TASER

The TASER is a sensitive electronic product and costly device that should be encased in its protective holster when not in use. Care should be taken to avoid dropping the unit and to assure that it is adequately secured while being transported in vehicles. Defective TASERS and TASER cartridges shall be returned to the TASER training staff. The faceplate of the TASER is secured to the cartridge body. Direct sunlight, heat or pressing on the faceplate may cause the cover to disengage from the cartridge. Cartridges with loose faceplates should be returned to the TASER training staff. Do not place cartridges near static electricity.

8. USE OF FORCE ISSUES

- a. The use of the TASER constitutes a Use of Force.
- b. The TASER is placed on the Use of Force Continuum in the Soft Intermediate Weapons category.